

## Chapter 1

### Context



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### History

Decatur County was one of four counties carved from the southern part of Delaware County in 1822. The county was named for Commodore Stephen Decatur of the US Navy. With the establishment of the county, Governor Jennings appointed four county commissioners.

The site for the county seat of Decatur County was chosen in June 1822 and named Greensburg in honor of the Pennsylvania hometown of the wife of the city founder, Thomas Hendricks.

A county jail was the first government structure built in the community in 1823 on the southeast corner of the courtyard.

The oldest part of the current courthouse structure was first constructed in 1874. The courthouse was renovated and expanded in the late 1990s, and completed in 1997.

The Decatur County courthouse tower tree has long been the best known feature of Greensburg. In the early 1870s the tower tree began as a small sprig growing from the northwest corner of the courthouse roof. The sprig grew into several trees. In 1888 some of the shrubs were removed. The remaining tree grew to approximately 15 feet before it died. It remains at the Decatur County Historical Society. Another tree made an appearance at the southeast corner of the courthouse tower during that time. The tower tree has become famous and the symbol of Greensburg and Decatur County.

State Road 3 was built in 1937. This highway connects Greensburg with Muncie and Ft. Wayne to the north and to the southern Indiana communities near Louisville, Kentucky.

In the late 1950s, Delta Faucet became one of the largest industrial employers in Decatur County. Other industrial employers that followed Delta included Gulf Oil, Crown Zellerbach which is currently Printpack, Bohn Aluminum, and BCA American Lifts. In the early 1980s, an industrial park on the city's eastside was developed including Gecom, Valeo, STI, and Mi-Tech Steel. Bohn Aluminum became known as ABS (Advance Bearing Systems) and BCA – Federal Mogul has since closed its Greensburg facility. Greensburg and Decatur County also have numerous tool and dye businesses.

Interstate 74 was completed through Decatur County in 1964. The interstate became the primary means of transportation between Indianapolis and Cincinnati and points beyond. During the early 1900s, the Interurban

operated by the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company provided passenger rail service between Indianapolis and Cincinnati. The trains were replaced with busses in 1932. A connecting bus service existed between Greensburg and Cincinnati, and a through route between Indianapolis and Cincinnati evolved. Bus service continued into the 1980s.

### **Local Dynamics**

Decatur County is divided into 9 Civil Townships as follows: Adams, Clay, Clinton, Fugit, Jackson, Marion, Salt Creek, Sand Creek and Washington. Incorporated communities in the county include Greensburg, Millhouses, Newpoint, St. Paul, and Westport. The Town of Milford was dissolved in 2007 due to insufficient revenue needed to meet the town's financial obligations.

In June 2006, Honda of North America announced that Greensburg and Decatur County would be the location for the company's new plant, a \$500 million investment that is projected to create 2,000 jobs. The company is locating the plant along I-74, just outside the northwest side of the city of Greensburg.

As a part of Governor Mitch Daniels' Major Moves initiative, I-74 through Decatur County will experience major preservation projects. These two projects will affect I-74 from Newpoint to Penntown and from the Shelby County line to SR 3. Other major transportation improvement projects from INDOT include:

- Reconstruction of US421/Old 421
- Reconstruction of the I-74/US 421 interchange
- Realignment of CR 300N
- Reconstruction and extension of CR 250W
- New construction of an overpass road

Railroads have historically been important to the Decatur County economy and will continue to be important as Honda begins operations. One of the challenges associated with the railroads is the number of at-grade crossings. These crossings can create access problems for emergency equipment when trains block intersections. The crossings can pose a threat to public safety and create traffic congestion when there is train activity during peak traffic times.